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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0390
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0161
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PHNOM PENH 001247

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USUN FOR POLSEC EAP SENIOR AREA ADVISER
USUN PASS TO TDY SHANNON DORSEY

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESSES CAMBODIA TO TAKE FIRMER STAND
ON BURMA

REF: STATE 137644

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH A. MUSSOMELI FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: In back-to-back meetings with Acting Foreign Minister Long Visalo and Prime Minister's Adviser Om Yentieng, Ambassador delivered reftel demarche, expressing U.S. gratitude for the strong ASEAN statement on Burma, noting that more would need to be done to support the Gambari mission, and calling for a separate RGC statement condemning the Burmese junta's violent repression of peaceful demonstrators and promoting reconciliation and reform. Visalo noted a newly released letter by Singapore's PM to Than Shwe in Singapore's capacity as ASEAN Chair as evidence that ASEAN had taken appropriate steps to date. Noting the serious impact on Burma's neighbors of the military regime's behavior, Ambassador stressed that the Royal Government of Cambodia could do more. Visalo took on board USG points and allowed that if difficulties remained, the RGC might look for another solution. Senior Adviser Om Yentieng echoed Visalo's assessment, and noted Singapore had been contacting other ASEAN members and that PM Hun Sen had telephoned Foreign Minister Hor Namhong in New York to discuss Burma. Om Yentieng cited a Cambodia-hosted ASEM conference in Siem Reap as evidence that Cambodia is supporting criticism of Burmese military wrongdoing. The Foreign Ministry and Om Yentieng's office were coordinating messages to the UN Mission as a follow-up to the Ambassador's demarche. RGC interlocutors are aware that FM Hor will meet with A/S Hill in the afternoon of Oct. 1. Given that the FM often takes a more flexible approach to our strongly stated concerns, we urge A/S Hill to press even harder for more action by the RGC. END SUMMARY.

Acting Foreign Minister Willing to Re-Consider

2. (C) In a longer discussion reviewing reftel points, Ambassador told Acting FM Long Visalo that the ASEAN message was very strong and had sent the right message to the Burmese military regime. Noting the junta's killing of defenseless demonstrators and the murder of Buddhist monks, and referring to the individual statements from the Philippines and Malaysia on Burma, the Ambassador urged Cambodia to issue its own separate statement on the situation. Ambassador pointedly noted that in recent history the only other Asian

regime to brutally kill Buddhist monks and rampage their monasteries was the Khmer Rouge. Burma could learn from Cambodia and how it had emerged from a history of conflict and moved toward a more open democracy. Moreover, Burma's situation was having a negative impact on regional stability in such areas as narcotics and trafficking in persons. The Burmese military regime would listen more attentively to the bilateral exhortations of individual ASEAN members, especially from a country like Cambodia that was similarly situated as a small developing country in the region and might be considered a trusted neighbor.

13. (C) Long Visalo thanked the Ambassador for his estimation of Cambodia, but noted that the ASEAN group had not only devised a strong statement but had given its support to the work of the SYG's special envoy Ibrahim Gambari, who was to call for meetings between all political parties in Burma with the aim of finding a solution. Long Visalo also noted the September 29 letter from Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong in Singapore's capacity as ASEAN chair, which threw the weight of ASEAN behind the Gambari mission and called for the release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. This should be enough for now, he stated, and Cambodia would wait for the results of the Gambari visit.

14. (C) When the Ambassador asked the Acting FM to press Foreign Minister Hor Namhong to be more assertive, Long Visalo acknowledged that if there was no peaceful resolution to the Burmese crisis, then it would be very difficult for ASEAN nations. If the Gambari mission is not successful, then Cambodia could look for a different approach, he conceded.

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Prime Minister's Adviser Only Slightly More Receptive

15. (C) Prime Minister's Adviser Om Yentieng responded to the demarche with the assessment that the Burmese regime would not give up power easily, notwithstanding ASEAN's very strong statement. He also noted Gambari's meeting with ASSK as one positive development in that mission. Om Yentieng stated that Singapore had contacted PM Hun Sen directly about the Burma crisis and that Singapore was in contact with other ASEAN nations. He noted that PM Hun Sen had also telephoned FM Hor Namhong in New York to discuss the situation in Burma. The Foreign Ministry and Om Yentieng's office were coordinating messages to the UN Mission as a follow-up to the Ambassador's demarche. Om Yentieng took on board the USG points and promised to relay our concerns to the PM and to follow up as needed.

16. (SBU) Commenting on a Cambodia-hosted conference with ASEM on freedom of expression held Sept. 26-28, Om Yentieng that many of the participants from 43 nations had used the occasion to condemn the Burmese regime. A Burmese delegation was also in attendance, he noted.

Comment: We Need to Keep Pressing

17. (C) COMMENT: Although the RGC has taken on board our points and understands the critical situation in Burma, it is not clear that they are yet prepared to break away from the ASEAN consensus. Long Visalo is constrained in his role as Acting Foreign Minister and does not have the ear of PM Hun Sen, as Hor Namhong sometimes does. Post recommends that A/S Hill press even harder with FM Hor Namhong to consider issuing an RGC statement on the Burma situation, in consideration of our wider and deeper relations. The Australian Ambassador told Ambassador today that she would press the PM to make a public statement, noting that its silence made Cambodia look bad and that it was time for the RCG to declare its outrage at the Burmese junta's actions.

